

# Highlights

Prices for gasoline and diesel fuel purchased at retail outlets show differing trends in April. Based on data from EIA's weekly retail price surveys, monthly average prices, including taxes, for gasoline and on-highway diesel fuel show the monthly average price at the U.S. level for the regular grade of gasoline rose 4.8 cents (1.2 percent) to \$3.900 per gallon, while the on-highway diesel fuel price fell 1.2 cents (0.3 percent) to \$4.115 per gallon.

Additional April market and sales activity for crude oil and the principal petroleum products are summarized in the following sections.

## Crude Oil

Though the April daily spot price for West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil at Cushing, Oklahoma remained above \$100 per barrel for the entire month again, it moved within a tighter range. Opening at \$103.03 per barrel, the price immediately marked the month's high of \$105.25 per barrel on April 2 following reports of production problems at key North Sea fields. Nevertheless, economic data that raised questions about growth in some of world's major economies, along with international political issues weighed on the price in coming days. The month's low was struck on April 10 when the price reached \$101.12 per barrel. Among other fundamental factors, the approaching reversal of the Seaway Pipeline (that will allow crude oil to be transported from Cushing to the Gulf Coast) slated for mid-May lent support for the price during the latter part of the month. Closing April at \$104.89 per barrel, the price was \$1.86 higher than its opening level. The price averaged \$103.32 for the month, down \$2.84 per barrel (2.7 percent) from March's average of \$106.16 per barrel. Compared to last year, the price was \$6.21 per barrel (5.7 percent) lower than the April 2011 average of \$109.53 per barrel.

- Monthly average crude oil prices began to ease in most categories of sales in April. The average domestic crude oil first purchase price fell \$1.75 (1.7 percent), to \$103.67 per barrel.
- The average free-on-board (f.o.b.) cost of imported crude oil dropped 87 cents (0.8 percent), to \$110.20 per barrel. The average landed cost of foreign crude oil fell \$3.44 (3.1 percent), to \$107.38 per barrel.
- The average refiner acquisition cost for domestic crude oil increased 45 cents (0.4 percent), to \$111.25 per barrel. The average cost of imported crude declined \$2.48 (2.2 percent), to \$108.52 per barrel. The composite refiner acquisition cost for crude oil fell \$1.23 (1.1 percent), to \$109.69 per barrel.

## Petroleum Products

### *Motor Gasoline*

At New York Harbor, the daily spot price for regular gasoline remained unsettled during April, giving back most of the increase seen in March. After opening at \$3.318 per gallon, the price moved to the month's high of \$3.411 per gallon on April 3, propelled by a host of logistical issues including pipeline problems and slower imports that contributed to tight supplies in the East Coast market. Weekly inventory data showing a decline in U.S. gasoline stocks coupled with robust sales activity in the spot market, the point in the downstream supply chain where petroleum products are traded on a cash basis with the expectation of immediate, physical delivery of the product, fueled another short-lived uptick in the price after the Easter holiday weekend. After that, the price fell into a steady decline for the remainder of

the month as inventory tightness was relieved by incoming supplies. The price reached its lowest point on the last day of the month, when it dropped to \$3.057 per gallon, 26.1 cents below its opening level for April. The price averaged \$3.206 per gallon for the month overall, 3.9 cents (1.2 percent) higher than March's average of \$3.167 per gallon and 2.8 cents (0.8 percent) more than the year-ago average of \$3.178 per gallon.

- April monthly average prices for sales of finished gasoline by refiners saw modest changes from last month's levels. The average retail sales price for motor gasoline rose 1.5 cents to \$3.404 per gallon (excluding taxes), while the average wholesale price decreased 1.3 cents to \$3.190 per gallon.
- Refiner motor gasoline sales decreased in April. Total sales fell 2.1 million gallons per day (0.6 percent) to an average of 321.2 million gallons per day. Retail sales inched up 200,000 gallons per day (0.7 percent), while wholesales declined 2.3 million gallons per day (0.8 percent). DTW sales accounted for 9.7 percent of wholesales, while rack and bulk sales made up 81.5 percent and 8.7 percent, respectively.

### ***No. 2 Distillate***

At New York Harbor, the daily spot price for No. 2 heating oil continued to experience only moderate changes during April. Opening at \$3.172 per gallon, the price moved immediately to the month's high of \$3.240 per gallon on April 2. A spate of warm temperatures coupled with an overall decrease in product values in the complex led the No. 2 heating oil price to its monthly low of \$3.085 per gallon on April 10. Tighter supplies, driven in part by exports, underpinned the price during the following weeks, while cooler temperatures in the Northeast provided a modest boost towards the end of the month. Closing April at \$3.172 per gallon, the price was level with the month's opening rate. April's average of \$3.151 per gallon reflects a 6.6-cent (2.1 percent) decline from March's average of 3.217 per gallon, and a 4.5-cent (1.4 percent) decrease from the April 2011 average of \$3.196 per gallon.

- Monthly average prices for sales of No. 2 distillates by refiners decreased in April. The average sales price for No. 2 diesel fuel to end users fell 3.2 cents to \$3.346 per

gallon, while the average wholesale price declined 5.6 cents to \$3.252 per gallon. The average price for No. 2 fuel oil sales to end users decreased 1.3 cents to \$3.509 per gallon, while the average wholesale price declined 5.8 cents to \$3.153 per gallon.

- Refiner sales of No. 2 distillates were on the decline in April. Total sales fell 5.0 million gallons per day (3.1 percent), to 155.3 million gallons per day. No. 2 fuel oil sales dropped 3.3 million gallons per day (26.5 percent), while sales of No. 2 diesel fuel decreased 1.7 million gallons per day (1.1 percent).

### ***Residual Fuel Oil***

- Refiner monthly average prices for residual fuel oil largely fell in April. Prices for low-sulfur residual fuel oil increased 4.2 cents to \$3.201 per gallon at retail, but declined 11.6 cents to \$2.805 per gallon at wholesale. Prices for high-sulfur residual fuel oil decreased 0.5 cent to \$2.596 per gallon at retail, and 9.3 cents to \$2.624 per gallon at wholesale.
- Refiner sales of residual fuel oil increased in April. Total sales rose 900,000 gallons (6.3 percent) to 15.2 million gallons per day. Low-sulfur residual fuel oil sales declined 600,000 gallons (14.0 percent), while high-sulfur residual fuel oil sales increased 1.4 million gallons per day (13.9 percent).

### ***Other Products***

- Refiner prices for the other surveyed products show mixed trends in April. Prices for propane, kerosene, and kerosene-type jet fuel decreased at both retail and wholesale, while aviation gasoline and No. 1 distillate prices increased at both levels.
- Refiner sales of these products varied in April. Sales of propane, kerosene, and No. 1 distillate declined at the retail and wholesale levels. Kerosene-type jet fuel sales rose at retail, but fell at wholesale, while aviation gasoline sales did just the opposite.

**Table HL1. U.S. Refiner Prices and Volumes of Petroleum Products**

(Prices: Dollars per Gallon Excluding Taxes, Volumes: Million Gallons per Day)

Products	Sales to End Users						Sales for Resale					
	April 2012		March 2012		April 2011		April 2012		March 2012		April 2011	
	Price	Volume	Price	Volume	Price	Volume	Price	Volume	Price	Volume	Price	Volume
<b>Motor Gasoline</b> .....	3.404	29.7	3.389	29.5	3.340	41.6	3.190	291.5	3.203	293.8	3.218	290.8
<b>Conventional</b> .....	3.342	17.7	3.310	17.6	3.293	27.4	3.149	197.3	3.155	198.6	3.179	197.9
Regular .....	3.318	15.7	3.291	15.6	3.277	24.7	3.130	173.9	3.140	176.2	3.164	176.8
Midgrade .....	3.484	0.9	3.401	0.9	3.382	1.4	3.102	7.2	3.135	7.1	3.215	7.2
Premium .....	3.571	1.1	3.517	1.0	3.505	1.3	3.369	16.2	3.340	15.3	3.358	13.9
<b>Reformulated</b> .....	3.497	12.0	3.505	11.9	3.431	14.1	3.276	94.2	3.305	95.2	3.300	92.9
Regular .....	3.455	9.5	3.465	9.5	3.393	11.3	3.248	80.8	3.276	82.1	3.274	80.3
Midgrade .....	3.597	1.0	3.605	1.0	3.529	1.2	3.346	1.5	3.403	1.5	3.381	1.6
Premium .....	3.689	1.5	3.698	1.5	3.624	1.6	3.459	11.9	3.491	11.6	3.474	11.1
<b>Aviation Gasoline</b> .....	4.313	0.1	4.133	0.1	4.132	0.1	4.157	0.4	4.052	0.4	4.035	0.4
<b>Kerosene-Type Jet Fuel</b> .....	3.283	33.0	3.337	32.1	3.306	34.4	3.255	22.2	3.296	23.5	3.259	20.3
<b>Propane (Consumer Grade)</b> .....	1.352	4.9	1.470	5.7	NA	3.7	1.163	21.6	1.293	24.2	1.433	20.8
<b>Kerosene</b> .....	3.916	0.0	3.919	0.0	3.796	0.0	3.243	0.8	3.306	1.0	3.296	0.9
<b>No. 1 Distillate</b> .....	3.794	0.1	3.780	0.1	3.809	0.1	3.673	0.3	3.591	0.6	3.676	0.3
<b>No. 2 Distillate</b> .....	3.349	12.5	3.383	12.3	3.371	13.6	3.246	142.8	3.300	148.1	3.289	139.1
No. 2 Fuel Oil .....	3.509	0.2	3.522	0.4	3.430	0.4	3.153	9.0	3.211	12.2	3.167	7.4
No. 2 Diesel Fuel .....	3.346	12.3	3.378	12.0	3.370	13.3	3.252	133.8	3.308	135.9	3.296	131.7
Ultra Low Sulfur .....	3.355	10.1	3.394	9.8	3.394	10.5	3.252	128.0	3.309	129.4	3.298	124.7
Low Sulfur .....	3.273	1.7	3.312	1.7	3.284	2.5	3.280	4.2	3.340	3.8	3.284	4.7
High Sulfur .....	3.432	0.4	3.286	0.4	3.210	0.3	3.184	1.7	3.239	2.7	3.184	2.3
<b>No. 4 Fuel<sup>a</sup></b> .....	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
<b>Residual Fuel Oil</b> .....	2.731	6.2	2.784	6.0	2.475	6.5	2.670	9.0	2.772	8.3	2.448	11.1
Sulfur Content not > 1 % .....	3.201	1.4	3.159	2.0	2.741	1.9	2.805	2.3	2.921	2.3	2.555	1.8
Sulfur Content > 1 % .....	2.596	4.8	2.601	4.1	2.370	4.7	2.624	6.7	2.717	6.0	2.427	9.2

NA = Not available.

W = Withheld to avoid disclosure of individual company data.

<sup>a</sup> Includes No. 4 fuel oil and No. 4 diesel fuel.

Note: Beginning January 2007, oxygenated gasoline is included in conventional gasoline.

Note: In January 2007, ultra low-sulfur diesel fuel was added.

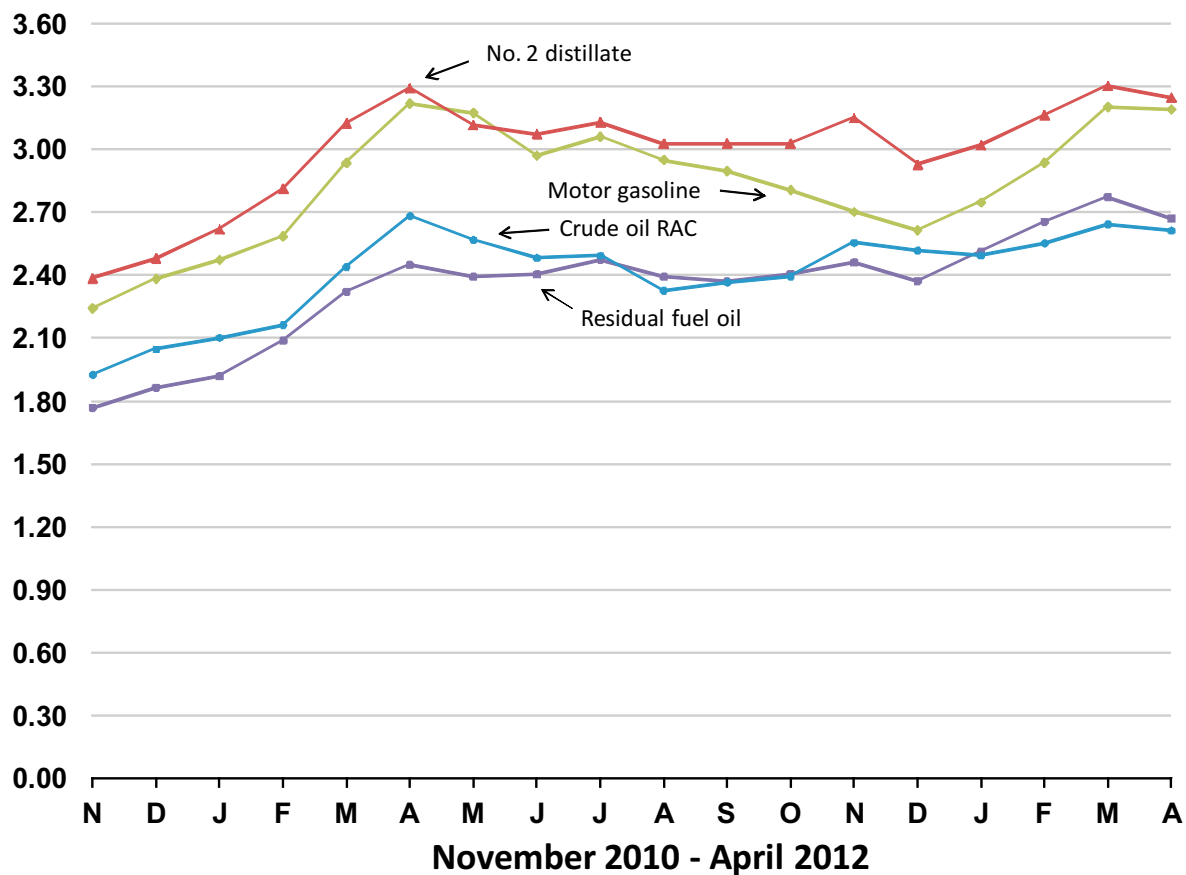
Note: All on-highway diesel must be ultra low-sulfur as of December 1, 2010.

Notes: Values shown for the current month are preliminary. Values shown for previous months are revised. Data are final upon publication in the *Petroleum Marketing Annual*. Total volumes may not equal the sum of the components due to rounding.

Source: Energy Information Administration Form EIA-782A, "Refiners'/Gas Plant Operators' Monthly Petroleum Product Sales Report."

**Figure HL1. Crude Oil and Petroleum Product Wholesale Prices**

dollars per gallon excluding taxes



Sources: Energy Information Administration, Crude oil refiner acquisition cost: Form EIA-14, "Refiners' Monthly Cost Report"; petroleum product prices: Form EIA-782A, "Refiners'/Gas Plant Operators' Monthly Petroleum Product Sales Report."